CS150-5
2/19/89

Private clubs shed tradition
Focus follows page 22

Chin likes being the boss again
Carolyn Walkup/Page F28

00133900
MS JEANNE LONG
CONGRESSIONAL INFORMATIO IAR
4520 EAST-WEST HIGHWAY
BETHESDA MD 20814
NR
Alan Liddle/Page 66

Nation's
Restaurant News®
The Weekly Newspaper of the Food-Service Industry

Vol. 23, No. 4 **Published every Monday by Lebhar-Friedman Inc.; $3 a copy, $29.50 a year** **January 23, 1989**

Restaurateurs battle INS crackdown

Blast immigration agents for zealous raids, fines

By Richard Martin

Hit by stiff fines levied mainly for technical infractions, restaurateurs are incensed over the Immigration and Naturalization Service's zealous enforcement of worker documentation laws.

While targeting the food-service industry for intensive scrutiny, the I.N.S. has levied some 1,300 fines on employers since last June, when a one-year leniency period elapsed and the agency began cracking down on violations of the stringent Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987.

"I'm feeling very bitter, very discouraged, because of all the time and money we've spent on compliance," said Julie Notley, personnel administration manager for Irvine, Calif.-based El Torito Restaurants, which has been fined a dozen times since June.

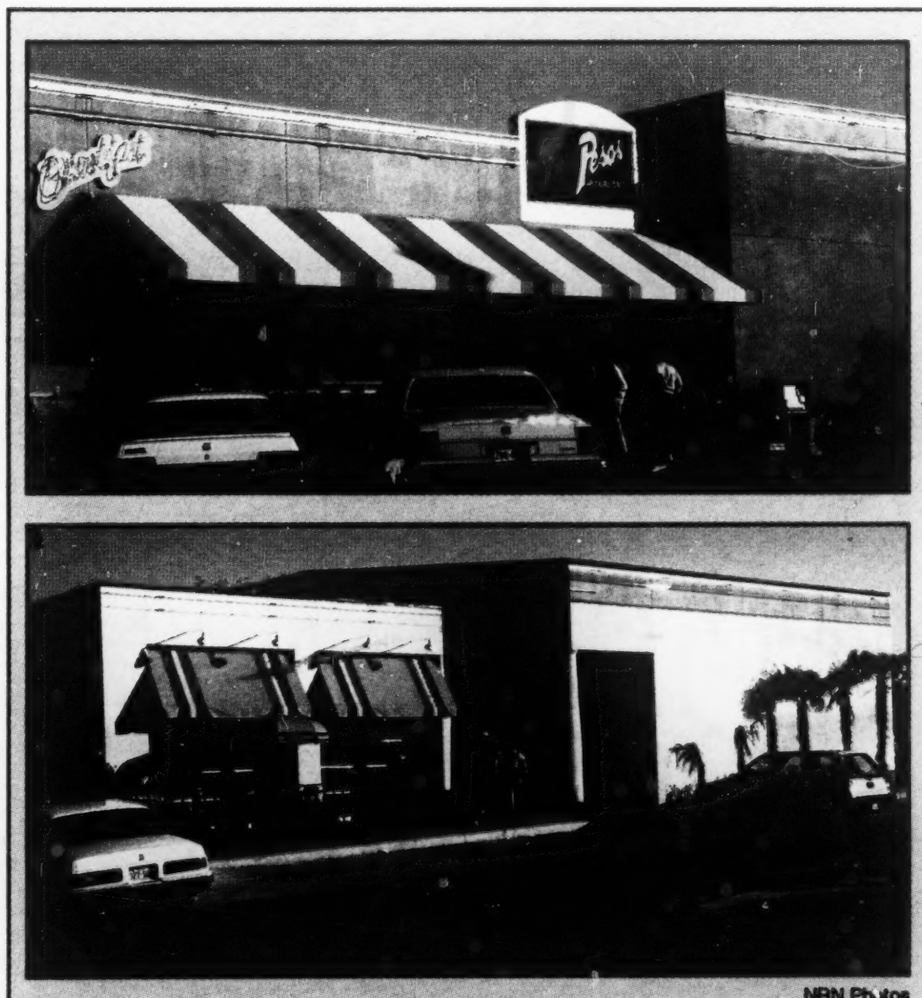
"I kid you not: They're meticulous; they go over these ['I-9'] forms line by line with a magnifying glass," said restaurant manager Patricia Kilbourne, whose Fuddruckers unit in Ventura, Calif., was fined $3,750 in November for technical shortcomings on the employment records of five workers who otherwise were legally hired.

Amid widespread labor shortages, employers are finding that worker-documentation burdens are aggravated by the industry's traditional reliance on immigrant labor and the chronically high rate of employee turnover.

Moreover, compliance with immigration reform rules is often hampered by the inexperience of young restaurant managers. They can become easily confused when called on to interpret legal hiring criteria and to evaluate the perplexing variety of qualifying documents, many of them fraudulent, that are proffered by job-seeking immigrants.

The 170-unit El Torito

*(See **INS**, page 4)*



NRN Photos

Six major changes, including awnings, neon, and building design, have been mandated for Two Pesos, top, after it was found to have imitated the trade dress of Taco Cabana, bottom.

Judge details changes in Two Pesos concept

By Tracey Taylor Woodard

HOUSTON — Imitation, a federal judge here has ruled, is not the sincerest form of flattery.

Instead, the imitation of 21-unit Taco Cabana's trade dress by rival Two Pesos Cafes could cost the latter company more than $2 million.

In a suit filed by San Antonio, Texas-based Taco Cabana, U.S. District Judge John V. Singleton doubled a jury's award for trade dress misappropriation to $1.9 million but did not

*(See **TACO CABANA**, page 82)*

Pizza Hut, Marriott link to operate in institutions

By Peter Romeo

WICHITA, Kan. — Pizza Hut is attempting to blaze a shortcut into the institutional market by opening miniature pizzerias inside food-service facilities operated by Marriott Corp.'s contract-feeding division.

Marriott manages the kiosklike, limited-menu outlets, paying Pizza Hut a fee based on the number of pies sold.

The food-service giants have already teamed up at three locations: a student-feeding facility at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.; an employee cafeteria inside a bank elsewhere in the nation's capital; and the staff cafeteria at St. Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

"It's a test deal," a Pizza Hut spokesman said. "At this point the people in our new-concept department are very, very happy."

Each site hosts a scaled-down Pizza Hut outlet mea-

*(See **PIZZA HUT**, page 82)*

Vicorp gives Florida units last chance

By Rajan Chaudhry

NEW YORK — It's shape up or ship out for Vicorp Restaurants Inc.'s depleted Village Inn ranks in Florida, company executives told a gathering of securities analysts here.

Unless results improve dramatically, said Vicorp chairman Charles "Buck" Frederickson, the company, which has already closed 15 of 45 company-operated Village Inns in Florida, will pull the plug on its remaining restaurants there.

"The problems are evident in the data," said Robert Benson, president of Denver-based Vicorp: "low average sales, declining customer counts, somewhat improved but still wholly unsatisfactory margins."

Benson all but nailed up the For Sale sign on the Florida stores.

"While every asset of a public company is

*(See **VICORP**, page 82)*

FOOD WATCH

Chinese New Year

CHICAGO — Memories of China restaurant here will celebrate the Chinese New Year with special food offerings.

The Year of the Serpent, 4687, will start on the Chinese New Year's Eve, Feb. 5. Events will continue till Feb. 11. During that time the restaurant will serve a special "Taste of China" dinner.

The meal, available for two or more customers, will cost $25 per person and will include crispy shrimp, Mandarin pot stickers, Cantonese pickled vegetables, hot and sour soup, Peking duck, Mongolian beef, Szechwan shrimp, Haw Gee Kaye chicken, stir-fried orange roughy, and a combination of double-fried noodles.

Memories of China will also serve dinner from Master Chef I-Pin Chiang's regular menu during the Chinese New Year's celebration. The à la carte menu includes 23 appetizers, salads, and soups and a variety of 87 seafood, fish, duck, chicken, beef, veal, pork, lamb, and vegetarian entrée dishes.

—Ken Frydman

BERNSTEIN: PRIME STEAK HOUSES SURPRISING PUNDITS — Page F3

INSIDE NRN

News

Sargent makes play for success at McFaddin 7
Spectrum revamps Savannah into Italian concept . . . 7
Westwood Group promotes Gordon to vp 14
Tang spearheads table grape boycott in NY 18
Ohio group sprucos up Joe's Burgerama concept . 54
Remington sold, now Ritz-Carlton 54
D'Ermo opens Dominique's in West Palm Beach . . . 54
Happy Guests plan fifth Salty's 66
Rocky Rococo, creditor settle debt out of court . . . 66

Focus

Section follows page 22
Cover Story/Private Clubs focus on excellence F7-F25
Bernstein/Prime steak houses surprising pundits . . F3
Rankin/'90s may see return of petro-terrorism F4
Tradition gives way to reform at private clubs F7
City Club keeps lines of communication open F12-F15
Buckhead Club in Atlanta sweetens service F16
Diving into the catering club pool F18
Regency caters to LA's elite F23
Members feel special at Chicago's Barclay F25
Viewpoint/The job description F26
Berlin chefs combine talents for gala event F30

Columns

Hochstein/Serve the good stuff up front 14
Liddle/Wohlgemuth never to realize expectations . . 66

Food

Fabricant/Domestic foie gras satisfies needs 11
What's Hot/Houston 11
Food News Digest 11

Marketing

Poll: McD increases share of ad awareness 12
Marketing Digest 12
Ad Watch/Leeann Chin 12

Financial

Consul banks on new TV ads 80
Food Price Outlook 80
Financial Digest 80
Stock table 81

Features

Corrections 4
Letters F3
Reporters' Journal . . . F4
Quotable F4
Name of the Week F4
Flashback F4
Product News 59,62
Classified 69-78
Advertiser Index 80

Upcoming in NRN

Watch for these Focus reports

Breakfast . . . . . Jan. 30
Cafeterias . . . . . Feb. 6
The top seafood houses . . . . . Feb. 13
Coex: Orlando Market Study . . . . . Feb. 20

NRN Directory

For your own subscription to Nation's Restaurant News, call toll-free 1 (800) 262-9500.

For other business, call (212) 371-9400 and extension:

Newsroom 285
Display advertising 404
Classified advertising 492
Subscription problems 419

Subscription rate: food-service operators and wholesalers-distributors, one year, $29.50, two years, $59. Auxiliary (consultants, architects, designers, manufacturers, suppliers, and schools) and all others, $59.

Nation's Restaurant News (ISSN 0028-0518) is published weekly, every Monday except the last Monday in December, by Lebhar-Friedman Inc., 425 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: Subscription Department, Nation's Restaurant News, 305 Madison Ave., Suite 535, New York, N.Y. 10165-0079.

For change of address, please write Subscription Department, Nation's Restaurant News, 305 Madison Ave., Suite 535, New York, N.Y. 10165-0079. Six weeks' notice is requested. Please send old and new address and zip codes. If possible, include mailing label.

Vol. 23, No. 4 Jan. 23, 1989

NEWS DIGEST

House committee chief proposes new wage hike

WASHINGTON — Congressional Democrats wasted no time reviving the minimum-wage issue as House Education and Labor Committee chairman Augustus Hawkins uncorked new legislation calling for a 39-percent increase in the national hourly pay floor.

Like legislation that was killed in the Senate late last year by an 11th-hour filibuster, the new proposal would boost the current $3.35 minimum rate to $4.65 in three steps, beginning with a 50-cents-per-hour hike on Jan. 1, 1990.

Hawkins' bill, introduced on the first day of the new congressional session, also calls for restoring the 50-percent federal tip credit. In addition, it would establish a five-member wage review board to review the pay floor every year.

Furr's, Luby's try drive-thru service

LUBBOCK, Texas — Enticed by several cafeteria chains' success with take-out service, two major players are testing drive-thru operations in a bid to capture more convenience-seeking patrons.

Furr's Cafeterias recently added side-by-side drive-thru lanes at an existing cafeteria here in the system's headquarters city. Items ordered from a limited menu are packed to customers waiting in their cars.

Luby's, a 118-unit competitor based in San Antonio, said it plans to convert a former bank into a "park-and-order" outlet. Patrons would park at one of six spaces equipped with microphones, place their order, and wait for kitchen staffers to send a message when the food is ready. The customers would then pull up to a pass-through window. The unit is slated to open in February.

Judge lets Popeyes stalk Church's again

JEFFERSON, La. — A federal judge has overturned a court decision barring Popeyes Famous Fried Chicken from pursuing a hostile takeover of Church's Fried Chicken, setting the scene for a pitched and possibly decisive battle between the fast feeders.

Church's said it would continue to search for ways of eluding Popeyes, which has revealed that more than 45 percent of Church's shares have already been tendered for $8 each.

A judge had come to Church's rescue, enjoining Popeyes from pursuing the takeover because of allegations that Popeyes executives formerly employed by Church's had supplied their new employer with privileged information about the prey. The injunction was overruled by a federal judge.

Bonanza licensee buys half of GM's York chain

ST. LOUIS — A Bonanza franchisee here has acquired 35 of the 68 York steak houses that General Mills is selling to weed that chain from its restaurant group.

Steak House Acquisitions, which operates 45 Bonanza units, would not say how much it agreed to pay for the York outlets. General Mills has earmarked $21 million for the divestiture.

Steak House said it would convert the 35 Yorks, which are located throughout the so-called Rust Belt stretching from Ohio into New England, into Bonanza restaurants.

Tastee Donut chain files for bankruptcy protection

HARAHAN, La. — Tastee Donut, the 54-unit doughnuts-and-burgers chain based here, has filed for protection from creditors following a change in ownership.

John V. Santopadre became the franchisor's sole owner by buying out two partners in October. He told a local reporter that a court-supervised reorganization will enable Tastee to adopt a new strategic plan that includes the addition of shrimp and fish sandwiches. Tastee currently offers miniature hamburgers called Kastleburgers.

Grand Met PLC revamps BK ads, top management

By Peter Romeo

MIAMI — Grand Metropolitan PLC, moving quickly to revamp newly acquired Burger King Corp., has reshuffled the ailing chain's management and refined the system's current advertising message.

Barry Gibbons, formerly head of Grand Met's European restaurant empire, was tapped to succeed Jerry Levin as Burger King's chief executive. Levin resigned, as had been expected.

His title of Burger King chairman has been assumed by Ian Martin, chief executive of Grand Met's U.S. operations. Martin was also recently named chairman of Pillsbury Co., succeeding Philip Smith, who resigned shortly after Grand Met acquired Pillsbury to gain control of its Burger King subsidiary.

Days before Burger King's top management was shuffled, the chain began airing commercials featuring a new closing sequence in which a grill changes into the Burger King trademark. The new spots, which also feature a speaking grill, stress the chain's signature flame-broiling cooking process.

In addition, Don Dempsey, Burger King's new marketing director, is reportedly reviewing new advertising output from N.W. Ayer, the New York agency that handles the chain's $200 million account.

Grand Met declared before acquiring Pillsbury for $5.75 billion that a top priority would be an overhaul of Burger King's marketing programs, which have failed to lift the No. 2 burger chain out of a prolonged sales slump.

In a related development Donald Slater, president of Pillsbury's S&A Restaurants dinner-house subsidiary, was given the additional title of chief executive. S&A has been slated by Grand Met for divestiture.

The conglomerate indicated that Martin would soon be relocating to Minneapolis, where Pillsbury is based, from Grand Met's U.S. encampment at Montvale, N.J.

Gibbons will be relocating to the United States from Europe, where he served as chairman and managing director of Grand Metropolitan Retailing Ltd., a subsidiary that operates 2,000 pubs and restaurants.

Ryan's launches tests of quick-service lunch

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Ryan's, the budget steak-house chain that helped spark a proliferation of food bars, is testing a new express-lunch service built around the chain's signature Megabar buffet.

The sales trial is part of Ryan's attempt to bolster lunch traffic. Toward that end, the chain recently added a $2.99 country-style steak entrée that already accounts for more than 3.5 percent of sales, according to Craig Weichmann, restaurant analyst for Morgan Keegan in Memphis, Tenn.

Ryan's recently launched a two-unit test of Express Lunch, a midday service for patrons who want a fast meal limited to items offered on the Megabar. Those customers can bypass the regular serving line, take what they want from the buffet, and pay at a cashier's station reserved for them.

McCall, formerly of Ryan's, launches own buffet chain

GREER, S.C. — Mark McCall, the former Ryan's president credited with originating the chain's Megabar buffet, is launching a new buffet-style chain named The Covered Dish.

The first two restaurants are slated to open in Houston. Each unit, which will offer a complete buffet for about $5.50, should gross about $2 million annually, according to McCall.

FOCUS | VIEWPOINT

Nation's Restaurant News

is published by
LEBHAR-FRIEDMAN INC.
425 Park Ave., New York, NY 10022
212 371-9400
Subscription Services, ext. 379 or 419
Cable Address: LEBHAFRIED
Panafax: 212 838-9487

Publisher JAMES C. DOHERTY

Editor CHARLES BERNSTEIN

Executive Editor Rick Telberg
News Editor Rick Van Warner
Senior Desk Editor Jeanne Isenberg
Special Projects Editors Joe Edwards, Peter J. Romeo
Senior Editor Ken Frydman
Associate Editors Karen Bruno, Bill Carlino
Field Editor Rajan Chaudhry
Bureau Editors Richard Martin (West Coast Chief *Los Angeles*), Alan Liddle (*San Francisco*), Carolyn Walkup (Midwest/*Chicago*), Jack Hayes (*Atlanta*) Tracey Taylor Woodard (*Houston*) Ken Rankin (*Washington*)
Copy Editor Michael Schrader
Desk Editors Peter O. Keegan, A. Rhona Melsky, Jennifer Thiele
Contributing Editors Stephanie Curtis, Florence Fabricant, Mort Hochstein, Atid Kaplan, Patt Patterson
Editorial Secretary Donnae Korber
Art Director Milton Berwin
Graphic Artist Alice Fernandes-Brown

Eastern District Manager John Yatkauskas
Eastern Area Manager Mary Jo Romeo
Advertising Sales Coordinator Chris Hernandez
Production Manager Francine Rizzo
Research Director Anne Frasciello
Production Director Stan Kaufman
Classified Advertising Manager Leslie Wolowitz
Controller Barry Okun
Executive Director Circulation Ed Nessel

Group Publisher C. Reese Musgrave

Founder (1900-1981) Arnold D. Friedman

President J. Roger Friedman
VP/Publication Services Barry Braverman
Sr. VP/Group Pub. James deGraffenreid
VP/Planning Harry A. Estes
VP/Publisher Jay Forbes
VP/Finance James Granato
VP/Human Resources Richard D. Groberg
VP/Editorial Director David Q. Mahler
Sr. VP/Group Pub. C. Reese Musgrave

REGIONAL OFFICES

Atlanta 278 Spring Drive, Roswell, GA 30075, 404-998-6966
Boston 1 Gateway Center, Newton, MA 02158, 617-527-6394
Regional Manager James H. Malver
Cleveland Summit One Building, 4700 Rockside Road, Independence, OH 44131, 216-642-3420
Office Manager Martha MacVean
Area Manager John Bistnik
Chicago 444 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611, 312-644-8688
Regional Manager Edward Nessel
District Manager Gary Knuth
Area Manager John McGuire, Ed Weisbrod
Los Angeles 606 N. Larchmont Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90004, 213-464-8321
Regional Manager John Donoghue
District Manager David M. Pittman
San Francisco 400 Montgomery St., Suite 1110, San Francisco, CA 94104, 415-362-2575
Regional Manager Dick Harrigan
Area Manager Steven Conca
Washington 17735 Striley Drive, Ashton, MD 20861, 301-774-3895
Mgr., Corres. Ken Rankin
Correspondents Deane Evans, Nicole Miles
Japan Diamond-Friedman Ltd., Chain Store Age News, Japan 1-4-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan, 504-6750

ABC MPA ABP

Publisher of Nation's Restaurant News, Discount Store News, National Home Center News, Drug Store News, Accounting Today, Computer&Software News, Chain Store Age Executive (with Shopping Center Age), *APPAREL merchandising*. Affiliates: Business Guides Inc., Lebhar-Friedman Books; Inside Retailing (Newsletter); Chain Store Age News, Japan; Largo Music Inc.

Subscriptions

Call (212) 371-9400, ext. 419
Having a problem with your subscription? Send us full details, including the mailing label from the last copy you received, along with your telephone number. We'll do everything possible to solve the problem at once. Write to Circulation Fulfillment Director, Nation's Restaurant News, 305 Madison Ave., Suite 535, New York, NY 10165-0079.

Permissions

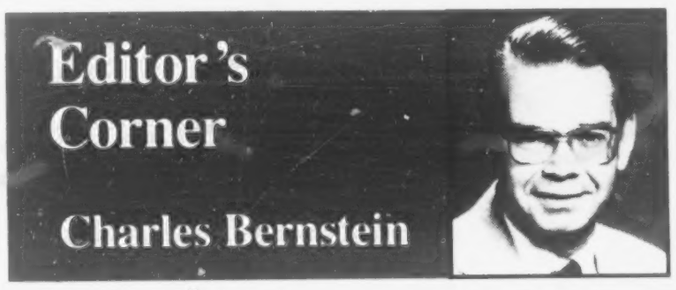
Materials in this publication may not be reproduced in any form without written permission. Requests for permission should be directed to Nation's Restaurant News, publisher, Lebhar-Friedman Inc., 425 Park Ave., New York, NY 10022.

Prime steak houses surprising pundits

The demand for steak is in a drastic slump, and steak houses are going nowhere. Consumers are opting for lighter, less expensive fare and want to stay away from beef.

Seafood and chicken sales are soaring while those of beef are declining. Healthful-food addicts predominate and want no part of beef.

Nor are customers willing to spend more than $25 each for dinner in the first place. Anything resembling a pricey restaurant is falling off in volume as it meets severe consumer resistance. Between the 80-percent meal tax deduction law and the tight economy, customers simply don't want to spend.



So goes the popular wisdom widely held throughout the country. But is it true?

Anyone who walks into any number of leading New York steak houses during lunch or dinner will find almost the exact opposite situation. The better steak houses are thriving, whereas other restaurants and segments are feeling the brunt of restaurant saturation and consumer resistance.

Perhaps this is not what it should be, but Christ Cella, Sparks, The Post House, Pen & Pencil, Smith & Wollensky, Peter Luger, The Palm, and Gallagher's are prospering. They are packed with customers most of the time — contrary to conventional wisdom.

With an average dinner ticket of $30 to $50, they are doing just fine. Why is this?

In the customer's mind, these places have a comfortable old-time feeling easy to identify with and relate to. They are the antithesis of the trendy places that supposedly are dominating the scene but come and go at breathtaking speed.

Most assuredly, these steak houses are not racking up record sales by diversifying the menu with chicken and seafood to any large degree. They are preserving a clear-cut identity of steak, a principle from which they have not veered.

They are offering quality prime, aged steak — a precious commodity that enough customers thrive on and are willing to pay for so that they can enjoy a happy experience without worrying about calories or cholesterol. What customers object to is less-than-quality steak served at any price.

Each one of the steak houses has a special identity but succeeds because of its excellent steak, its own unique potatoes, and a special atmosphere. At The Palm it's sawdust on the floor. At Gallagher's it's the photographs of old-time and modern sports greats adorning the walls and the menus — sports figures that many of the customers readily recognize.

But customers are not flocking to Gallagher's Steak House just to see photographs of Arnold Palmer, Casey Stengel, Joe Namath, Eddie Arcaro, and a host of other sports celebrities. The major attraction is the great steak and price-value that owner Jerry Brody (who also owns the famous Oyster Bar restaurant in New York's Grand Central Station) has become known for since he stepped down as Restaurant Associates chairman 26 years ago.

Gallagher's draws its customers because of the tradition that has prevailed at the steak house since it opened in 1933, because of the camaraderie at the bar and at the tables. Far more than that, though, they are still flocking there for the luscious sirloin steak, the superb filet mignon, the tasty calf's liver steak, and the unsurpassed roast prime rib. And for the large portions, not for tiny nouvelle nibblings.

They have time to worry about their waistlines only when the steak is not so tasty. They tend to work off or exercise off much of the accumulated weight.

So the next time somebody talks about the trendiest nouvelle restaurants surpassing steak houses, it should be noted that steak houses are far from dead. In fact, the magnetism of steak is incomparable.

LETTERS

First real *Domino's unit makes Manhattan debut*

Editor, NRN:

For the second time this calendar year we at Domino's Pizza read with great interest that we were "re-entering" the Manhattan market for the "second time." No one here at our headquarters could recall entering Manhattan prior to our store opening near the New York University campus on Nov. 17.

After checking with your reporter, who did a fine job researching the story, we discovered we are both right!

She told us that she had checked the phone books from a few years ago and, sure enough, there was a Domino's Pizza in Manhattan! However, it was not us. Apparently someone else was using the Domino's name in violation of our trademark and patents.

For the record, Domino's Pizza Inc., the world's largest pizza delivery company, is entering the Manhattan market for the very first time. Manhattan is an exciting new market for us. We're doing very well so far, and we look forward to adding new units in the near future.

— P. David Black
Operations Vice President
Domino's Pizza
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Consultants are needed to shed light on problems

Editor, NRN:

I am, as you know, a consultant and darn proud of it!

I agree, in part, with your editorial column of Jan. 2 and take great exception to some of the quotes that would make it sound as if only a very few operators employ consultants when needed.

I have been consulting, domestically and internationally, since 1969 and have been sharing my knowledge with little to no thought of compensation as a trade-paper columnist, an editor-publisher of a newsletter, an instructor at U.C.L.A., a volunteer executive for SCORE and the International Executive Service Corps, and a guest lecturer at numerous restaurant conventions for more than 20 years. And 99 percent of my business has come through referrals by other clients and those people with whom I have worked through the years.

The quote "Nobody knows as much as we do about our own business" (meaning: more than a few operators taking the position that they don't want to deal with consultants) is partly true. Operators *do* know more about their own businesses than outsiders do!

But that's the problem. Many do not know how to run their businesses efficiently and profitably; they lack the years of knowledge and experience that we professional consultants have gained through working in our own companies and with other clients. What may appear to be insurmountable problems for clients are usually ones that consultants have handled and solved many times before.

Our industry's closure rate, approximating some 50-percent failures the first year and 30 percent of the remaining failing during their second year in business, ranks first or second in our U.S. economy.

I cannot recount the numbers of times I have convinced neophyte-would-be-operators to stay out of the restaurant business. We have been through the wars, and who is better qualified to help and teach others to understand what they are getting into, the financial and family pressures, etc.?

Consultants are the "third dimension" to what lawyers and accountants do whenever clients need assistance. We are not there to *run* their businesses for them but to help them solve problems so they can be more successful.

— Leon Gottlieb
Leon Gottlieb and Associates
Tarzana, Calif.

Icelandic boycott perils US economic interests

Editor, NRN:

A belated thank-you for a fair Nov. 21 editorial column on the whaling issue and boycott of products from companies associated with the fishing industry of Iceland.

The two major companies in question, Coldwater Seafood Corp. and Iceland Seafood Corp., obtain a certain amount of their products outside Iceland, operate processing facilities in the United States, and employ several hundred people each — largely minorities in economically disadvantaged areas of the country.

Coldwater, furthermore, purchases several million pounds of Alaskan pollock from U.S. processors.

So, as you see, in addition to the points you made in your editorial, there are some U.S. economic interests at stake here.

Again, thank you.

— Petur Masson
director of marketing
Coldwater Seafood Corp.
Rowayton, Conn.

MARKETING

Poll: McD increases share of ad awareness

Oliver and Company led December promo

By Bill Carlino

LINCOLN, Neb. — McDonald's jumped three percentage points in top-of-the-mind advertising awareness during Nation's Restaurant News December Adtrack Poll.

In the NRN survey designed to gauge fast-food advertising effectiveness, McDonald's captured 52 percent of 1,000 consumers who were asked, "Of all the fast-food advertising you have read, seen or heard, which advertising first comes to mind ? ".

During December, McDonald's ran an in-store promotion and accompanying TV spot tied in with the animated film, "Oliver and Company." The 30-second commercial spotlighted Oliver and Dodger, the movie's central characters, which were available in figurine form with the purchase of a McDonald's gift certificate book.

Both replica models were outfitted with a musical computer chip that played either "Jingle Bells" or "Frosty the Snowman" when the figurines were squeezed.

During the month of December, McDonald's ran an in-store promotion and accompanying TV spot tied in with the animated film, 'Oliver and Company'.

The Oliver and Company spot was the creation of the Chicago-based,, Leo Burnett USA agency.

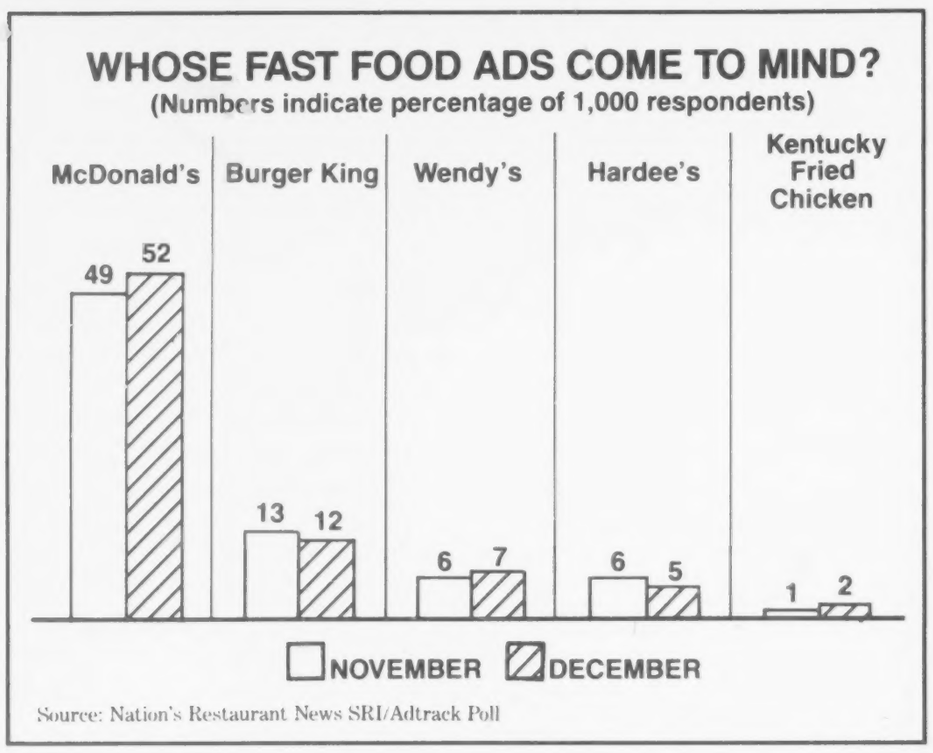
Augmenting December's national airing of "Oliver and Company" were regional-level spots carrying the "Good Time, Great Taste" tag line.

Second-place Burger King dropped one percentage point to finish with a 12-percent rating.

Burger King's advertising agency of record, N.W. Ayer, will reportedly present a new creative campaign to company marketing director Don Dempsey sometime this month. And under the chain's new ownership, Grand Metropolitan PLC, further marketing changes are likely.

In December, Dublin, Ohio-based Wendy's reversed a two-month slide by climbing one percentage point for a total of 7 percent, while Hardee's, whose California Raisins promotion accounted for a two-point hike in November, fell a single point to finish with 5 percent.

Kentucky Fried Chicken rounded out the top five fast-food operations in the NRN Adtrack Poll with a one-point increase for a total of 2 percent.



Source: Nation's Restaurant News SRI/Adtrack Poll

AD WATCH

HIGH ROAD TO CHINA: Motorists driving along I-95 in St. Paul, Minn., or on Excelsior Boulevard in St. Louis Park, Minn., will get an eyeful of Leeann Chin's famous stir-fry vegetable or lemon chicken dishes. The 11-unit take-out and buffet operation is attempting to lure hungry Twin Cities drivers with a billboard ad campaign. Created by Naegele Outdoor, the boards will rotate entrées every two months.

"AdWatch" submissions should be either proofs, prints, or stills of a new print, direct mail, or television advertisement for a restaurant or restaurant chain, with accompanying information on the responsible agency name, if any, and the media time and placement schedule. Submissions should be sent to: Marketing Editor, Nation's Restaurant News, 425 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

NRN MARKETING DIGEST

Furr's/Bishop's begins new ad push

LUBBOCK, Texas — Furr's-Bishop's Cafeterias will begin airing a new block of 15-second television commercials that emphasize both the chain's menu variety and its food quality.

According to Furr's-Bishop's marketing director Rich Lahvic, the spots, which are themed "Food this good takes all day," will be part of the chain's most extensive marketing push in two years.

In addition to implementing the television campaign, the 153-unit cafeteria chain recently rolled out all-you-can-eat specials and children's menus and is currently testing a carry-out service.

Created by the Levenson, Levenson & Hill Agency of Irving, Texas, the spots will be aired in approximately 50 markets.

Skipper's chooses local ad agency

BELLEVUE, Wash. — Skipper's, the 215-unit seafood chain headquartered here, has selected Seattle-based Borders, Perrin & Norrander to assume the creative portion of its advertising account.

The agency switch comes as part of Skipper's marketing and advertising shift to work with agencies located close to its Washington headquarters. Borders, Perrin & Norrander succeeds Minneapolis-based Martin/Williams.

In October of last year Western International Agency of Seattle took over the media-buying portion of the Skipper's account.

Among other restaurant accounts, Borders handles creative for the Burgerville USA chain through its Portland, Ore., office.

Griffith joins Domino's International

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Debra Griffith has been named director of promotions and communications at Domino's Pizza International Inc.

Her expanded responsibilities will include all marketing advertising and public relations for 275 Domino's units in 15 international markets.

A Domino's employee since 1986, Griffith had previously been a public-relations representative at the Ann Arbor-based Comerica Bank and Great Lakes Bancorp.

Pier House taps Orlando agency

KEY WEST, Fla. — The Pier House Resort, a 120-room upscale hotel here, has named the Orlando, Fla.-based Robinson, Tesawich & Pepperdine Inc. its advertising agency of record.

Specializing in hotel advertising, the shop also handles advertising for the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, Tenn., and the Stouffer Grand Beach Resort on St. Thomas, in the U.S. Virgin Islands.